Leading the Way

Greenfield World Trade and its distributor partners offer operators and manufacturers the stability, support, and persistence that are so essential to recovery and growth throughout the Middle East.

It is a time for building and rebuilding in the Middle East, economic hardship and military confrontation recede slowly into the past. Today's Middle East looks ahead to bright new beginnings and a resurgent business environment. To a new age of tourism and an influx of foodservice operators in all sizes and segments. The region's future, in short, is one filled with opportunity.

(continued on next page)
Enter Greenfield World Trade (GWT) and its network of distributor partners. A longtime powerhouse in the foodservice and hospitality industry around the world, Greenfield has always allied itself over the years with an unsurpassed collection of the Middle East’s most professional and successful foodservice distributors. This exclusive, hand-picked grouping has helped build and spread the firm’s influence to nearly every corner of the region. The consensus is clear: the time is ripe for growth throughout the Middle East and Greenfield World Trade can help make it happen.

Dexter T. Laughlin, president of Champion Industries, says he is “very bullish” on prospects in the Middle East. “All the signals we’re getting from our friends there, including Greenfield, lead us to anticipate a very strong year in 2004, possibly with double-digit growth.” Champion, a long-time partner of GWT, has established its largest Middle Eastern markets in Jordan and the UAE. Laughlin is looking ahead to a sizable increase in business from Iraq toward the end of his company’s fiscal year in late August. Part of that increase will undoubtedly come from a new family of rack conveyor machines set for introduction during the coming months.

“The climate for foodservice is very much improved since 2002,” says Jonathan Vadnos, vice president of Greenfield World Trade. “Obviously, resolution in some of the conflict areas has allowed people to release their capital investments into the markets, and that’s allowing our foodservice equipment distributors to go ahead and proceed with their plans for stocking equipment. Also, a number of franchisees are moving forward in the area.” Foodservice equipment makers and marketers are looking at the UAE as a very hot spot. Tourism is a huge driving force. “They’re looking at Dubai as basically ‘the Hong Kong of the Middle East,’” says Vadnos, “and it really is. It’s the area where inter-Arab tourism is heading. It is the destination to which everybody wants to go because of the low-cost of goods, a wide variety of products, and excellent facilities in terms of infrastructure of hotels, resorts, and spas. It’s where everybody wants to end up on vacation.”

Sami Nasr El Dine, commercial kitchen, laundry & refrigeration equipment department manager for Juma Al Majid Est. (EMW) TSC Division in Dubai, calls the nation “a highly competitive and evolving market. The hotel industry is booming due to the various trade exhibitions, international and local events. Recently, Dubai successfully hosted the IMF event, which has brought in thousands of visitors from all over the world.” Juma al Majid’s clients are primarily located in the UAE, but the firm has done business throughout the Middle East, as well as in France & the UK. It is currently working on the Conference Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi. “The market is getting very competitive,” notes Hilary Barreto, Commercial Manager for Elenco General Trading Est. in the United Arab Emirates, “with new entrants in the business all the time. The quality of equipment and services differs, but we are often faced with the prospect of offering our quality equipment at the price offered by the cheapest bidder.” Elenco also operates in the other countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council, with occasional exports to CIS countries, Africa, and Iraq.

“It has been a good year for us,” says Lori Barger, International Sales Manager for TRAEX. “You would think business would pretty much shut down with all the war and the terrorism, but apparently a fair amount of hotels are moving forward, like the City Star Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, and the Shangri-La Hotel in UAE.” The reason, she suggests, is the determination of those who live in the region. “You have to deal with the terrorism, but have to go on.” For the year ahead, Barger expects some countries opening up to new business. For example, new opportunities are sprouting in Lebanon. “We’ve gotten some interest out of Saudi Arabia that we’ve not had in a while. It seems that some countries that have been ‘closed’ for a while are opening back.” Vadnos’ partner in covering the Middle East for GWT is sales director Tarik Fayadh, who has specific responsibility for the Mediterranean/North Africa region. Says Vadnos, “He is from the Middle East which allows our group to communicate in Arabic whenever necessary. Fayadh is traveling the region and meeting with our distributors. He maintains sales and operational discussions throughout the entire region.” Adds TRAEX’s Barger, “I see it as a real strong statement that things are happening, that they’re sending two people out. It’s
almost continuous coverage.” A lot of publicity is being lavished on a pair of gigantic new resort projects that should help raise tourism to new heights: The Palm Islands and The World Island. Other major tourist projects in the region include Dubailand, Festival City, The World’s Tallest Tower, and Hotel Underwater.

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Wood Stone Corporation is “cautiously optimistic” about business opportunities for 2004 in the Middle East, according to Merrill Bevan, International Sales Manager. “Despite the ongoing conflicts in the region, from a foodservice development perspective there seems to be an increasing feeling of growth and rebound. We expect that to continue throughout 2004.”

In 2003 Wood Stone supplied equipment for projects in Bahrain, the UAE, and Qatar. One of the most positive trends of 2003 was that in addition to the large hotel projects it is often involved with in the region as the world’s number one specified stone-hearth oven, the company is also making strides into the chain and independent restaurant markets. “This trend echoes our growth in other international markets where the project accounts increase our market presence. Before long we’re not only the choice of the 5-star hotels, but also the choice of savvy restauranteurs. In 2004 we have many more opportunities on the board with both the project and independent segments.”

Wood Stone’s partnership with Greenfield World Trade, which began in 1999, “is paying significant dividends,” adds Bevan. “The Greenfield Middle East team of Neal Asbury, Jonathan Vadnos, and Tarik Fayadh bring to the table tremendous cultural knowledge and market understanding of this diverse and fascinating region. The relationships they have set up with key distributors throughout the Middle East are the center point of our marketing effort. Because of Greenfield we boast an unsurpassed channel of distribution and service. We are
proud to say that no one can take better care of their end users than the Wood Stone-Greenfield team.”

“The conflicts in the Middle East do not appear to have stopped growth and development in the foodservice arena,” agrees Carol DeAngelis, a spokesperson for Legion Industries. The company “remains optimistic about business opportunities for 2004 in the Middle Eastern sector.”

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In 2003, Legion sales in the region were largely in the U.A.E. Most of the activity centered on its exclusive line of chafers and buffetware, but execs remain confident that the presentation of their large equipment line will begin to bear fruit in 2004.

“Our relationship with Greenfield began in 2001, and we entrust them with defining our approach to the Middle East,” says DeAngelis. “Their relationships in the area and their understanding of the market make them a valuable partner for Legion Industries.”

HOT MARKETS

The UAE is a trendsetter in the region when it comes to development projects. Dubai, in particular, “has shown the world that it can bring its dreams to realization, particularly in the travel and leisure industry,” says Barreto. “It is also in the forefront in the IT sector, finance and as a hub of trading/exhibitions and festivals.” In addition, he points out, the hotel industry is “forever growing” with nearly 100 projects in various stages of planning or execution. Currently on Elenco’s plate are projects like the Sheraton Residence and Beach Rotana Hotel & Towers in Abu Dhabi; Madinat Jumeirah Resort in Dubai; and the Kalba Hospital in Sharjah.

Business is also picking up in Bahrain, which is planning a number of its own tourism-driven establishments. Among them are a number of financial institutions that will also be associated with hotels and resorts. Tourism is a “growing industry” in Bahrain, reports Noor Pathan, the manager of Bahrain Gas. While fast food is fairly well entrenched, the next big wave is tak-
ing place among family restaurants like Applebee's. Competition is keen in Bahrain, he adds. “Everybody wants to try and sell equipment. There is a general tendency for people who see you’re doing well to want a piece of your business. But we are established for the last 45 years. We have a good piece of the market-share. We are continuously progressing. We are going ahead.”

Saudi Arabia is also trying to build regional tourism. According to Vadnos, Saudi Arabia “is always going to be a very large market for foodservice equipment because of the movement of people for the Haj, going to Mecca and Medina. There is almost two million people per year going to those two cities during a seven-day period.” The cities are already brimming with American and home-grown fast-food operators, including mobile KFC and McDonald’s units. “Foodservice is a phenomenal part of the Haj,” says Vadnos. “They plan for it every year, all year long, basically.” “Unless the situation in Iraq stabilizes,” notes Barreto, “the opportunities will be on hold.” Once the situation in Iraq is stable, however, there will probably be some strong export opportunities for UAE firms. “But the major chunk will be sourced from Kuwait. Eventually, Iraqis will help themselves.” The UAE has been in the forefront of providing financial and humanitarian help to the Iraqis. Adds Barreto, “We have not worked out any strategy for the re-building, not knowing how the situation is going to evolve.” Despite that, he notes, “The current Iraq crisis has not had any brake on the UAE activities, and once peace comes, there will be vast business and leisure contacts between the countries.”

Palm Island, billed as The Eighth Wonder of the World, includes a pair of large manmade island groupings in the shape of palm trees. World Island, another manmade grouping of islands, will consist of a series of 200 islands, covering 60 million square feet and positioned strategically to form the shape
of the world map. “That is going to be an ongoing, five-year spectacular project,” says Vadnos. “There are over 350 hotels planned there over the next four to eight years, with the first ones opening in 2005. Across the whole region, that’s what people are looking at.” With these two new projects coming on board,” he adds, “the future is looking bright and brisk in the UAE, and specifically in Dubai.”

Mohamed Abdul Kalam, Commercial Manager for Raqtan Trading Est. in Saudi Arabia, agrees that Iraq will present opportunities, but “only after a stable government is put in place, and the situation becomes normal.” Raqtan currently has a trio of large projects in the works: two in the private sector and one involving, at least in part, the government. Mohammed Tahseen, General Manager of Baalbaki & Partners Co. in Jordan, cites “very good demand for (foodservice) equipment in our markets.” The firm also operates in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. “There is a lot going on in Jordan, and a whole lot in Qatar,” notes Daniel Raio, president of Dough-Pro in Paramount, CA. He is working with KFC units in the Middle East. He is looking for 2004 to be a “very good year” for business in the region. “With all the settling down there, people are building new restaurants and going forward,” Raio says. “They are ordering more equipment. That means people are going to the restaurants.”

The Future of Iraq
The rebuilding of post-war Iraq will clearly provide opportunities. As Vadnos notes, “The issue there for our distributors and for foodservice equipment in general is safety. I spoke with a number of customers in Kuwait, and right now very few are actually traveling into Iraq. Some have general trading representative arrangements there, but the real issue remains safety. We deal with a very large distributor in Kuwait, and their board of directors will not allow any
employee to travel to Iraq right now. That is a fairly common theme. In fact, the Baghdad International Airport just closed again in terms of commercial flights.” “Rebuilding is going on,” adds Baalbaki & Partners’ Tahseen, “and demand is high for almost everything. Prices in Iraq are cheap, and customers there demand products of good quality and cheap prices at the same time. They are also seeking to stock all kinds of equipment.” His current projects include the Ammoun Hotel and Vocational Training Corporation. Laughlin also plans for Champion to be part of the rebuilding effort. “We have the foundation and infrastructure, so when it heats up and projects come on line, we’ll be there.” “We know that massive business might crop up from Iraq,” agrees Ghassan Hatoum, General Manager of Emirates Kitchen Equipment (EKE). “We have already supplied many items to the catering com-

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The Human Equation

The importance of interpersonal relationships can be seen nowhere in the world as it can in the Middle East. “In Asia it takes a long time to get somebody to sign orders,” says Vadnos. “But in some of the countries there you can almost walk into someone’s office and walk out with a purchase order. That’s pretty rare in the Middle East.” There, he continues, prospective business partners “want to sit down and talk about current events. They want to talk about issues in the world. They want to talk about business. Interpersonal relationships are critical. “You might call on an account continuously for three-and-a-half or four-and-a-half years before business actually comes,” Vadnos adds. “But business will come as long as they see continuity and stability and the same person visiting them every eight or 12 weeks. Business will come to you.”

As many have said throughout the globe, it is precisely this bringing together of people that accounts for so much of Greenfield’s effectiveness. “I think that’s what makes our
company successful, the fact that we have continuity in our sales force,” Vadnos emphasizes. “Our distributors want to take the same person to that key executive at that chain account every two or three months over a period of four to five to seven years, and we provide that.” “Historically, Greenfield has served as a good conduit to the smaller street dealers,” says Champion’s Laughlin. “They have helped expand our relationships with dealers and distributors.” He stresses the importance of having a partner who visits the region regularly and “shares intelligence and opportunities.” “(Greenfield’s) service is excellent,” says Hatoum. “We have very good support from GWT. Their prompt service and personal attention from their employees are remarkable.” His company does business in the UAE, Russia and neighboring GCC nations like Muscat, Qatar and Kuwait. It has been working with GWT since 1999. The firm has several upcoming hotel projects in the UAE, including Palm Island, Al Raha Beach Resort, Traders Hotel, and Platinum Yacht, as well as the Ministry of Defense.

Barreto views GWT as “a reliable source of U.S. products for which they hold export distribution rights to our market. They also help in other difficult-to-source US. products.” He praises Asbury and his colleagues for their “prompt replies to queries, competitive prices and regular visits. We wish to particularly cite the visits of Jonathan Vadnos, whose efforts to increase our mutual business are bearing fruit.” “Most of our needs with the kitchen equipment are often sudden and urgent due to the demand of our customers,” says Thaer Abdou, general manager of Food Equipment Supplying Co., Ltd. (FESCO) in Saudi Arabia. “Greenfield is quick in responding, assisting and providing the best options and units. We and our customer are most thankful for the excellent service provided by them.” FESCO has worked with Neal Asbury for more than a decade.
A VARIETY OF SOLUTIONS
The key to success in foodservice equipment in the Middle East, however, remains “bringing a variety of solutions to customers’ requirements,” says Vadnos. “We cannot fit their needs into our boxes. We, ‘the foodservice equipment manufacturers and providers’, must be the ones who are flexible in our dealings with this market. We need to have plenty of options for them to choose from.” For example, he explains, “sometimes it starts with providing after-sales service on equipment that you have not even sold. You utilize your network of trained service agents to help an end user on other equipment. That distributor then creates a rapport, a relationship, with that end user, so the end user comes back to that distributor for their next round of equipment procurement. The distributor then comes back to the foodservice equipment suppliers, for example, through Greenfield, who introduced them to that end user in the first place. So sometimes it starts from the service point of view. Having technical service capabilities is a must, and obviously a major component for any successful foodservice equipment provider.”

“Greenfield offers great technical support and very professional response for all our inquiries,” says Essam Abaza, executive manager of Palmyra in Qatar. His company handles a variety of projects, including hotels, universities, hospitals, petroleum companies and the military. “Greenfield helps us by having good prices, quick delivery and very wide range of equipment,” he adds. “Jonathan (Vadnos) visits us at least four times per year. That kind of regularity keeps the cooperation and relationship between us strong.” Qatar, he adds, remains “the most secure place in Gulf area. Those sentiments were echoed by Ghassan Ali-Hasan, general
manager of Awar Trading in Jordan. Awar services food and beverage operators in Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Among its current projects are the Four Seasons-Damascus and the Ammoun Hotel & College. Contrade Center in Egypt has been partnering with GWT for four years, during which vice president Joseph George has found it to be “very supportive in many aspects, from professional order handling to negotiating special deals with various factories when needed.” Among Contrade’s current projects are the Sheraton Heliopolis Extension, the Safir Hotel and a Hard Rock Café. Bahrain Gas’s Pathan has been working with GWT since its inception. He calls it “a fair company with their prices, and which provides excellent service. And the companies that are working with them are very reliable.” Bahrain Gas’s customer base includes hotels, mess halls, canteens and clubs. Vadnos is emphatic in his belief that it is “absolutely not” too late for companies to make their initial inroads into the region. “The market is growing. The market is expanding. It is certainly a complex group of individuals and markets that you’re going to entertain and be meeting with. But again, it is expanding. It will take time, perhaps, to receive that business, but you just have to be persistent in your approach.” Persistence pays off, as those who have worked with Greenfield World Trade for any length of time have already found out. In a region of the world as complex, dynamic and central to global commerce as the Middle East, the need for a partner that offers so much has never been greater.
Greenfield World Trade provides the world’s leading commercial food service equipment, supplies and related services for the global market.

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Arctic offers quality refrigeration products and excellent service provided at a competitive price.

Bar Maid
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Champion/Aladdin
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Eagle
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